

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

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OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library
Association)

Edited by T. E. Callander

Fulham Public Libraries



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EDITORIAL

ON behalf of the President, we extend to all members our heartiest good wishes for 1932; wishing them rapid promotion, freedom from salary cuts, and, where it may apply, that the crafts and assaults of the L.A. examiners may be brought to nought.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday, the 20th January, at 6.30 p.m., at the National Library for the Blind.

It was decided, at the December Council, that, owing to the woeful lack of support that the project has received, all ideas of holding an assistants' conference at Easter will be abandoned.

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT appears, with this issue, in a new guise. The Press and Publications Committee have decided that each volume of the journal shall be set in a different type-face of distinction, and we trust that our choice for 1932 will meet with general approval. The text is set in ten-point Poliphilus and Blado Italic, while Locarno Light and Locarno Italic have been used for the title-page. These founts have been cut by the Monotype Corporation, whose courtesy permits us to publish in this issue a short article on the history of the Poliphilus and Blado faces.

We offer our heartiest congratulations to Mr. James Ross, an old friend and supporter of our Section, upon his promotion to the post of Chief Librarian of the Bristol Public Libraries.

While on the subject of congratulations, it may not be out of place to mention, with suitable respect, the appearance of Mr. Stanley Snaith, our stormy petrel, in the august pages of *Who's Who*. We believe that he is the first assistant librarian to take his place in this hall of fame.

We suggest, in all respect, to the Education Committee of the Library Association that their regulations concerning smoking during examinations are in need of revision. At the London centre during the December examinations, candidates were forbidden to smoke by an invigilator on the grounds that those ladies who were sitting might object. This is surely a little pre-War. In our limited experience of the modern girl, we find that she is not averse to tobacco, and it seems hardly necessary to deprive unfortunate males, in great mental distress, of their only solace for this one reason.

It may or may not help our case to mention that the Hon. Editor, who has for

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some years made a nuisance of himself to invigilators by abortive attempts to light a cigarette, managed to smoke continuously at examinations in May and December 1931 without arousing any protests from those ladies who were sitting at the same time.

The next meeting of the Association will be held on Wednesday, 13th January, at the Norbury Public Library, Beatrice Avenue, London Road, Norbury. Refreshments will be served at 6 p.m., by kind invitation of the Norbury staff, and the meeting will commence at 7 p.m. The Chair will be taken by Councillor Dr. A. Sandison, Chairman of the Libraries Committee, and Mr. L. M. Harrod, Librarian-in-Charge of the Norbury Library, will read a paper entitled "A Tour among the Midland libraries." This will be followed by the presentation by the Croydon staff of "Whitebait at Greenwich," a short play by J. M. Morton.

There are frequent trains direct to Norbury from Victoria and London Bridge. The Library may also be reached by No. 16 or No. 18 trams, or by Nos. 134 and 59A omnibuses. Beatrice Avenue is about five minutes' walk from Norbury station, in the Croydon direction along the London road.

It is with great regret that we chronicle the death of Mr. John Rivers, Deputy Librarian of Hampstead, and sometime Editor of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT. We are indebted to Mr. W. Benson Thorne for the following note of his career:

JOHN RIVERS

By the death of John Rivers, Deputy Borough Librarian of Hampstead, the A.A.L. loses one of its original members. Outside the Borough, in which his life's work was done, he was not known very widely, though there will be a few of the older members of the Association who will remember him. Of a retiring and very gentle nature, he ever sought the background, and could seldom be persuaded to take any prominent part in any movement or activity, whatever his interest in it might be. A book-lover and serious student of literature, his greatest happiness perhaps was in those duties directly concerned with books, purely business matters producing in him only boredom. As an art student his attainments were of no mean standard, his judgment and criticism being sound and reliable.

In the early days of the Association Rivers was fairly regular in his attendance at meetings, and served on the Committee for a while. For one year, July 1904 to June 1905, he was responsible for the Editorship of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, during which time he added to its prestige; he likewise conducted the literary section of a Study Circle which operated in those days among junior members. All along, however, he was perfecting his scholarship in French, and the results of this are seen in his books: *Louvet: revolutionist and romance writer*, published by

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Hurst & Blackett in September 1910 at 16s.; and *Greuze and his models*, published by Hutchinson in November 1912 at 10s. 6d. As such books go, both were entirely successful, giving their author a recognized place in that field of knowledge. He also had other literary work to his credit, most of it being embodied in various periodicals.

His death in middle age removes one who achieved a good deal in a quiet way as a librarian. A widow and three daughters are left, to whom the sympathy of members will be extended.

POLIPHILUS AND BLADO

By MRS. B. L. WARDE, Publicity Department, Monotype Corporation, Ltd.

IN the history of typography, as in the history of human thought, certain achievements, great in themselves, rank far greater, in that they are practical creations instead of merely fine adaptations of principles already known. There are many illustrated books so famous as to be the crowning treasures of any collection; but it is to be doubted whether any printed picture book can rank superior to the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, or *Strife of love in a dream*, published by Aldus Manutius in 1499 in Venice. The volume, crowded with symbols, is itself a symbol of the passionate interest of the Renaissance in classical antiquity. The nymph Polia represents the long-lost culture and tranquillity of the pagan mind, miraculously won back from Pluto's kingdom by the Orpheus of the Renaissance, and the decade which produced this book represents that single backward glance of amazed recognition before the vision faded, and science and the reformation replaced the dawning hope of restoring the golden age.

Apart from the iconographic importance of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, its typographic importance is twofold. It makes extensive use of capital letters, and very different capitals from any which had been previously cut, for they are miniature reproductions of the very finest classical inscriptional lettering; and the lower case represents a new style of letter-cutting which was to sweep aside all predecessors and begin the uninterrupted development of what is called "Old Face," right up to the time of John Baskerville, in the eighteenth century. Old Face made its first appearance in Aldus's office in 1495, in the type of the short tract *De Aetna*, written by the great poet and humanist Pietro Bembo. The type of the *Poliphilus* differs from that of the *Bembo*, namely, in the addition of the magnificent capitals mentioned above. That both these books were collected and studied by the leading publishers, orthographers, and other creators of the printed letter in France cannot be doubted; indeed, the first faces cut by Garamond, Augereau, and perhaps others for the great printer-publisher Robert Estienne betray their Aldine origin in many specific details of great significance.

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That some of Aldus's books were actually forged, we know, just as we know that the Aldine Press, being the fountain of first editions of the classics, commanded the publishing world of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Not only did this Press give the world the Old Face letter, which is so much more compact and transparent than the noble but self-conscious Venetian faces preceding it, but also it gave us the form of cursive Greek which we use to-day, and the very first cursive type, or italic. Italic, at the time of its invention, was the type not meant for combination with roman; it was simply a translation into metal of the condensed current script widely used for small manuscript books, and Aldus seems to have created it specially for use in pocket editions.

It was because the italic of Aldus was not in any way meant to be a companion of a roman face that it was not selected as "the italic of" the Poliphilus type when the latter was re-created in exact facsimile by the Monotype Corporation some eight years ago. The face which was selected is one which appeared a generation later, at the time when the first indications were appearing that eventually both roman and italic would appear on the same page. Few letters have more interesting history, or more intrinsic charm, than the italic now called *Blado*.

The revival of calligraphy, one of the earliest æsthetic and practical interests of the Renaissance, and the various cursive hands which came into existence, owed less to the new art of printing than to the great increase of documents going through the papal Chancery. From the second decade of the sixteenth century we have a number of remarkably beautiful writing books which testify to the importance of the Chancery hand ("littera cancelleresca"). Antonio Blado was a printer who worked for the Roman Curia, and also published some of the most famous writing books of the time, including those of Ludovico Arrighi, Palatino, and Ruano. There are several Chancery italic types of the period, all more or less based on Arrighi's beautiful and sensitive design, but the one chosen, which appeared first in 1525, has exactly the compactness and colour which make it an ideal mate for Poliphilus. The reproduction was one of the earliest fruits of the decision of the English Monotype Corporation in 1922 to rescue from the past the greatest historical type faces for use under modern commercial conditions. These in turn were made possible by the ability of the "Monotype," the only separate type-setting machine to cast both roman and italic letters with the full kerns, or overhanging parts, which were taken for granted by type cutters up to the time of the invention of mechanical composition.

As a final word about a Chancery form of italic, it may be said that even at the time of the publication of Mr. D. B. Updike's well-known book on printing types, this italic form was practically unknown. The recognition of its rare personality and beauty is due to researches made by Mr. Stanley Morison. The interests of this author-editor in calligraphy as well as in typography brought about a parallel

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revival of the Chancery hand amongst that growing number of people who take formal and informal handwriting seriously; so that the modern Blado type, and the other Chancery italics which followed it, bear now something the same close relation to modern calligraphy as did the originals in the sixteenth century. In those days, however, handwriting and beautiful writing (literally calligraphy) were one and the same thing, simply because only the "fine" people did any writing; the descent of the written hand into its present emotional and illegible vulgarity was the result of the democratization of learning, and the reduction of what was originally a skilled craft into a human device as common as that other general innovation, the use of the fork.

PLAYS OF 1931

By W. B. STEVENSON

WHAT characteristics make a play good?

Sincerity is of the first importance, since without it the play falls flat, and we are unconvinced. Knowledge of the theatre is necessary, knowledge of what the audience will believe, and what it will refuse. Dialogue should be natural and economical. The plot should be compact, and no "loose ends" be left at the final curtain, and the characters should be natural. There have been, however, and will continue to be, great plays without all of these characteristics—O'Neill's *Strange interlude* was one, a diffuse play, with dialogue that was often unreal, characters that were maddening. Yet *Strange interlude* remains one of the greatest achievements of the modern drama.

What do we find in the plays of 1931? I will save much trouble by stating at the outset that I have found no masterpiece. There have been a number of competent plays, two or three good comedies, two really sincere plays; the year's output has been as usual then.

Let us begin with the comedies. J. B. Fagan's *The Improper duchess* was trivial: it lacked the art and originality of *And so to bed*; it amused, but left no impression. It was a splendid vehicle for the brilliant acting of Yvonne Arnaud, but—perishable goods.

John van Druten's *London wall* gave us the lives of the ordinary, and succeeded in doing what the author set out to do: we all know these people, and can believe in them. The same author's *There's always Juliet*,² exploited "charm" to its last limit, and succeeded triumphantly.

Aldous Huxley calls *The World of light* a comedy, but by all ordinary standards, comedy it is not. The dissecting-room atmosphere, in which the reader can fairly wallow in *Antic Hay* or *Point counter point*, strikes us with a chill

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when we find it in a play. Mr. Huxley's characters are puppets—he loves to knock them down; to take them to pieces and examine their defects; to set them off again halting after their mishaps; and to grin sardonically at their misfortunes. This is an unpleasant play about unpleasant people; and the spiritualist theme, though necessary to the plot, is treated in a decidedly biased manner—a curious thing to find in any of Mr. Huxley's writings, for he generally endeavours to go too far in the opposite direction. A disappointing play from a writer whose achievement reaches such a high level.

James Bridie's *The Anatomist*, with its blend of horror and grim humour, and its original central character, Dr. Knox, is a play that leaves a vivid impression on one's mind. Though the story of the "Resurrection men" is a grisly one, the play never reminds us of a Lyceum melodrama, and the characterization is true to life. In *The Switchback* the same author has turned to satire. In his introduction he tells us that "this plays is intended to demonstrate the Vanity of Human Wishes, the Importance of Being Earnest, the Inevitability of Fate, the Economic Law, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Pleasures of Hope." It does all this. In *Tobias and the angel*, his dramatization of the book of Tobit, Bridie has produced a little masterpiece of wit. These plays give us a new dramatist of great ability and wide range. Bridie's most endearing quality is his "pawky" humour, and he may do much to bring about that long-awaited event—the revival of the Scottish drama.

Bigamy seems to be a favourite theme this year: there are three plays—Milne's *Michael and Mary*, Philip Johnson's *Queer cattle*, and Martinez Sierra's *Take two from one*, which obviously group themselves because of this theme.

Michael and Mary gives us a normal point of view, and the two central characters are very real, and one believes that they *would* do the things Mr. Milne makes them do. The modern dramatist as a rule draws his inspiration from domestic unhappiness and infidelity; Mr. Milne draws his from happiness. It is fashionable to sneer at this for "sentimentality," yet few are they, I hope, who could read or see this play without delight.

Philip Johnson's *Queer cattle* is unconvincing, probably because the author has not convinced himself of his characters' reality. Self-sacrifice can be made convincing on the stage, but we have a welter of it here, and the play becomes incredible.

Take two from one begs the question in the most delightful manner conceivable. After two acts of indecision, Faustino, as the final curtain comes down, still does not know which of his wives to choose, and he appears on the footlights with a travelling bag, after having left both. He seats himself in the stage box and Diana appears, telling him to come back immediately, and asking how the play is to finish. "It is finished," says Faustino. "Not properly," says Diana.

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"Well . . . it's only a farce," says Faustino, and they become involved in a Pirandellian argument as to whether they are real or not. Faustino settles the matter by saying, "We'll meet again to-morrow." Bigamy was never settled more amicably. This play, with its delicate irony, is one of the best comedies of the year.

Again we meet domestic discord in Ronald Jeans's *Lean harvest*, where the all too familiar "tired business man" and his neglected wife are contrasted with a struggling author and his wife, equally unhappy. The play as a whole is disjointed, and says little; it has its amusing moments and some good character drawing, but fails to convince.

From the unhappy married, we turn naturally to the frustrated unmarried, to find our old friend, the ageing spinster, in *Autumn crocus*. An ingeniously blended dish this, by a clever chef. A colourful foreign background, an unappreciated husband, a love-starved maiden, a touch of nobility in the "sacrifice" theme, plenty of comic relief, a liberal seasoning of sentiment—*et voila*!

The Barretts of Wimpole Street gave us a Victorian setting for a love-affair that was accomplished under trying circumstances. The character drawing was superbly done, except for the rather too bluff Browning. The effect of the play was exceptionally convincing, and the "conflict" motif was used admirably. *The Barretts* well deserved its success.

In Noel Coward's unperformed *Post-mortem* we have a war play with only one scene set in the war period. The other scenes show war's after-effects, or rather lack of effect, for we see the old delusions still held, the old hypocrisies still rampant. The dramatic device by which John Cavan is enabled to see England in 1930, although he dies in 1917, is convincing enough, and its possibilities well exploited.

This is a remarkable play. How one wishes that the people who ought to read it could be made to read it. Its passionate demand for less cant and hypocrisy, its hatred of catchwords and of sham ideals, give it force and intensity beyond anything else Coward has written. It analyses the feeling of the younger generation well in Perry Lomas, who commits suicide. Here is his reason:

"A sort of hopelessness which isn't quite despair, not localized enough for that. A formless, deserted boredom, everything eliminated, whittled right down to essentials—essentials which aren't there."

And the way out? Mr. Coward does not suggest anything. He tells us not "to wander about searching for some half-formulated ideal. An ideal of what? Fundamental good in human nature? Bunk! Spiritual understanding? Bunk! God in some compassionate dream waiting to open your eyes to truth? Bunk! Bunk! Bunk! It's all a joke with nobody to laugh at it."

Its purely destructive criticism leaves us unsatisfied with this play, but Mr.

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Coward *has* given us something to think about. Those who do not wish their plays to make them think are advised not to read it.

C. K. Munro's *Bluestone Quarry* has as its theme the conflict between employer and employed, and we are led both to believe in the futility of organization of the workman and the futility of individualism. Tars, the materialist, believes in "the power of the one," and Mahon, the idealist, his brother, believes in the "united power of the thousand." Both fail. The irony of this play is bitter. Its characters are life-like, but talk just a little too much, so that the play gives one the impression of diffuseness. It is an impressive piece of work, however, and one would like to see a public performance.

R. C. Trevelyan's *Three Plays* are the only examples of that difficult and hybrid medium, "the poetic play," that I have come across this year. Inevitably, plays of this character drag in performance. Of the three *Sulla* has the most appeal, and *Lycoris* is something more than a mouthpiece. *The Pearl tree* introduces an incident in the life of Krishna, while *Fand* goes to the Cuchulain legend for its inspiration. None of these plays "move," however; they remain obstinately static, in spite of their expressive diction.

Prometheus bound, translated by Gilbert Murray, is in a class by itself. The play, with its colossal theme, is beyond criticism, and the translation is the best we can hope for, being an adroit compromise between the literal and the poetic. We who have found Greek more of a trial than a delight have much cause to be grateful to Professor Murray.

Among the one-act plays we have had Philip Blair's *Drumgarth*, a competently written and interesting play of the "'45's," dealing with the subject in a more prosaic fashion than usual. It is a relief to find the romantic aspect suppressed, and the play seems truer to life for it.

One-act plays of to-day, Fifth Series, is a book that will be found invaluable. Knowledge of the scope of these volumes has helped many of us to solve readers' problems, and this volume contains excellent material for the amateur. Philip Johnson's *The Lovely miracle* is an exquisite little piece, and J. A. Ferguson's *The Scarecrow*, with its eerie Hallowe'en atmosphere, is well constructed and gripping.

A Tale of a cat, and other plays, by Lucy C. Salaman, is intended expressly for amateur players, and should fulfil this function admirably. Eva C. Stocks's *King Herod* is also written for amateurs, and shows a choice of interesting characters and an adroit use of carols in heightening atmosphere.

In conclusion, one cannot say that 1931 was a vintage year. The printed play is even more ephemeral than the novel, and the life of a success is rarely longer than its box-office appeal. Yet one hopes that some of this year's plays, notably *Post-mortem*, the Bridie comedies, *Bluestone quarry*, and *Michael and Mary* will not join their predecessors of 1930 in mouldering on our library shelves.

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF 1931

By DORIS OVELL

THEY say that juvenile issues are going down. They blame education authorities with a weakness for the reorganization of schools, or they make silly statements about the declining birth-rate. Still the issues go down. Something must be done, so, with a gulp and a sickly smile, librarians fall back on the old gag about supplying quality rather than quantity. On surveying the children's books published during the year, I come to the conclusion that those who cling to quality must abandon hope of quantity. The prices of the good juvenile books do not allow their purchase in bulk. At least, under the present pretty-pretty attitude to the children's library, there is not much hope of quality. It seems that librarians object to paying seven and sixpence for a juvenile book. In the adult department things are different. Slim volumes of poetry at six shillings, the latest best-selling rubbish at seven and six, trashy biography at a guinea—these things are the sign of humanism in book selection, and look well in the bulletin. For the juvenile library a moan about the price of Milne and Lofting and an order for the remainder merchant. There is room for a new attitude in juvenile book selection. Having taken advantage of my circumstances to slip that past the Editor, I append the result of my gleanings.

Pride of place goes to Jonathan Cape for giving us the best children's book of the year. *Emil and the detectives*, by Erich Kästner, is a book that can hold its own against any critic. It is attractively produced in a clever modern binding, printed in good type, and has a story that is altogether lovely. The plot has all the ingredients that the most movie-ridden mind can crave, and yet it is saved by its delicious humour from crude sensationalism. The story of Emil's recovery of his stolen money through the agency of a gang of young detectives is the setting down in black and white of the dream of every juvenile desperado, while the account of the newspaper publicity given to the escapade is a little satire that should not be wasted on more mature minds.

The same publishers give us *Swallowdale*, a sequel to Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*. Altogether, we are indebted to Messrs. Cape both for these two books and for their reduction in the price of the Dolittle series. A word in their ear. The unfortunate Dr. Dolittle is at present in the moon, and it is unthinkable that he should be left there. It is time that Mr. Lofting brought him back to earth with another sequel.

Richard Hughes has written one of the best books of short stories of the year in *The Spider's palace*. On the whole it is a remarkably good piece of work, although it seemed to me that one or two of the tales were a little too subtle for

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small readers. In my experience, children like their stories to be quite obvious in their plot, and do not enjoy a too delicate touch. And, I would mention here, the illustrations to this book meet with the emphatic disapproval of the young art critics of Bethnal Green. I have heard them described as "hairy."

Gerald Bullett's *Remember Mrs. Munch* is one of those talking animal books that appeal to quite small children, possibly because one needs to be very small to find the dialogue credible. *The Singing wood*, by Lady Lilly Frazer, is a fairy-book that takes cognizance of a fact often overlooked by those moderns who think that the children of 1931 are as sophisticated as their elders pretend to be. It is forgotten to-day that children are incurable sentimentalists, and that most girls and many boys have no objection to a book that makes them feel thoroughly miserable. *The Singing wood* has not forgotten to be a trifle lachrymose, and it gains in popularity what it loses in hilarity.

Juvenile non-fiction has been pleasantly varied. Among them, two rattling good ship books come to mind, *The Book of the sailing ship*, written and illustrated by Stanley Rogers, and Ellison Hawk's *Romance of the merchant ship*. An excellent anthology, with a subject that is neglected, is Eleanor Graham's *Welcome Christmas*, a collection of riddles, carols, legends, and everything needed for a happy Christmas except food. It is strange that, although Christmas becomes more and more the children's feast, books about the season are so rare that one is generally compelled to fall back upon the *Christmas carol*. *Poems for Peter*, by Lysbeth Boyd Borie (accent on the last syllable, please), is a charming though slight book of verse which introduced me to a young man who thought it a pity that God had not flavoured the sea with sugar instead of with salt.

The "How and Why Series" attained to the rare distinction of a series of reviews in one of the more highbrow weeklies. Presumably they were thus treated out of editorial curiosity as to what the distinguished gathering responsible for them had made of their venture into the schoolroom. I do not think a great deal of the effort. Martin Armstrong, on *The Paintbox*, is passable, though hampered by lack of space. C. E. M. Joad's *Story of civilization* I disliked. Mr. Joad falls into the elementary pit of talking down to his readers, and he takes advantage of their virgin minds to put forward theories as facts in a way that he would hardly dare attempt were he writing for adults. I should like to hear the author of *The Flight from reason* on his account of the theory of evolution.

There have been almost too many nature books. It seems to be the easiest subject in the world about which to write a children's book. Allen W. Seaby's *Birds of the air* stands out from the rest as something a little different.

Nineteen Thirty-one gave us far too few books for very small children. It becomes more and more a problem to provide for the child under nine who comes to the juvenile library, and the publishers do little to help us. Blackwell's

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have done their best with *No. 9 Joy street*, but my experience shows that the Joy Street books are too much of a good thing. There is too much in them. They are of far more use for reading to children than for being read by them.

We have had a new stunt this year—the juvenile omnibus book. A frost, quite definitely. You can put that one over on an adult, but not on children. They know. They have already seen the stories in separate volumes, and they consider themselves swindled if they are induced to take the Westerman omnibus home. Apart from the twist, the omnibus type is too small, the paper is too thin, and at least one young gentleman has pointed out to me that the boards are too flimsy for the weight of the book. Out of the mouths . . .



SOME POETRY OF 1931

By STANLEY SNAITH

*Our new Arcadian, with the best intentions,
Not lacking courage of his own conventions,
Relieves in bijou verse of Georgian slickness
Youth's pseudo-spiritual apple-sickness ;
Or, tripping loose-locked in the hawthorn glades,
Recites cbaste ditties to the dairymaids.
And in six months or so his pallid brooklet
Of inspiration dribbles through a booklet
Biliously bound, tricked out in modish type :
With such a dressing, there's a sale for tripe ;
For Elkin Mathews finds such stuff, though dull, worth
Presenting. Hail the literary Woolworth !*

*Such is the Georgian, bard of mildest mood.
His rebel rival scorns the Georgian brood :
He looks upon their work and finds it mud ;
Thinks De La Mare a dodderer, Yeats a shrimp,
And Tennyson no better than a pimp.
Westward each eve be sallies on the spree
In Bloomsbury, that Stronghold of the Free
(Apocryphally known as W.C.),
Calls at a pub for Bitter or for worse,
And, sipping, wrestles with the Laws of Verse,*

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*To perpetrate in cracking-jointed stanzas
Crass paradoxical extravaganzas.*

*And if to patronize you don't know which—
Why, then, there's always Wilbelmina Stitch.*

THIS year's is not an opulent harvest. There has been, I think, a falling off in quantity, but no qualitative increase. The few poetry strongholds in the periodicals have fallen to the onslaught of mediocrity. Even *The London Mercury*, which plumes itself upon its earnest watching of the skies, has found no new planet. A handful of our more deciduous singers have continued to write, but their new work will only have value as (to quote Gordon Bottomley's words) the soil and compost in which the new seeds shall strike. The Poet Laureate has lost much of his old energy: he was never a careful craftsman, but with the decline of his poetic impulse he writes as rawly as the veriest tyro. *Minnie Maylow's story* is incredibly untouched by the gleam and glory of poetry. Mr. Robert Graves, too, is disappointing (*Poems, 1926-30*, Heinemann, 3s. 6d.). He is never less than interesting; and he never writes without something of his own to say; but the element of grotesquerie, which casts across his verse a hard, dry, witty sparkle, has been his undoing. Except at rare moments Mr. Graves is no longer a poet. He lives neither in the senses nor in the imagination, but in the intellect. His poems are not creative experiences; they are arguments, wingless, crabbed, and often obscure. One values his intellectual candour and technical mastery. In the ninety pages of his new book there is not a single purple passage. But a breath of lyrical excitement, even at the cost of an occasional purple passage, would be preferable to this grey and tangless uniformity. Mr. Edward Davison, on the other hand, has never shown his gifts more winningly (*Heart's unreason*, Gollancz, 6s.). He is not a notably individual poet. The savours and cadences of his verse have been common currency for a hundred years. But he presses them into his service with a kind of modest confidence that secures one's admiration. The shorter lyrics, in which he captures, delicately and in a rich brevity, a spirit of *tristesse* not unlike that of Mr. De La Mare, are his best. He fails only when his emotional impetus is not his own: as in *Shadow in the roof*, which is pure Hardy; and when he permits himself such feeble generalities as the line

A thousand seagulls in the setting sun.

Miss Sylvia Lynd's work, *The Yellow placard* (Gollancz, 6s.) is as reserved as Mr. Davidson's, but not so subtly intuitioned. It has a nice clearness and dexterity; but its shining surface conceals no depths. Her poems are pretty playthings,

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easy to read, and easier to forget. Mr. Aldous Huxley (*The Cicadas*, Chatto, 5s.) never succeeds in transposing into the key of verse the silvery ironies of his best prose. His *Theatre of varieties* might have been the theme of an effective short story; but Huxley's command of poetic imagery is not sure enough for him to make a poem of it. More satisfying are the purely lyrical poems and sonnets, which, while lacking the profounder pulse-beats of great poetry, are distinguished by a quality not too common just now—a crystalline precision of statement.

"H. D.'s" (Hilda Doolittle's) *Red roses for bronze* (Chatto, 6s.) is characteristic of her: clear, cold, and fragile. Her tiny lines (often there is only one word to a line) unfortunately suggest a poetic stammer. There is nothing in this book comparable with her lovely poem, *Lethe*. Miss Edna Millay, too, falls a little below her best (*Fatal interlude*, Hamish Hamilton, 5s.). *Fatal interlude* is a sequence of sonnets describing a disastrous love episode. They are composed with something of the concentrated gusto of an athlete leaping a hurdle. They have that stinging pathos, that sheer muscular mastery of words, which have always characterized her writing. But Miss Millay, though one of the two or three greatest lyrical poets of the age, is not quite comfortable with the sonnet form. It gives her impassioned utterance an alien touch of formality. Mr. Drinkwater's weakness as a poet is that he has neglected to teach himself to write.

*The pluming snows that spread
Along our sparkling bill*

is a phrase characteristic of him. The adjectives are ineffective and mutually irreconcilable. One gathers that his new poems (*Christmas poems*, Sidgwick and Jackson, 2s. 6d.) are intended for children; but their naïveté is unconvincing because it is forced. Mr. Humbert Wolfe (*Snow*, Gollancz, 6s.) is a poet with an inexhaustible fertility of expression; a consummate casuistry it may be, but it is extraordinarily deft.

*But over the ice of the wind the swallows skate
On their wings' outside edge their flawless 3,
Nor could old Euclid's self assimilate
The gull's celestial geometry,*

he writes, and one gasps at the sheer audacity of it. Even the close resemblance of "celestial geometry" to Mr. Drinkwater's phrase in a similar context, "divine arithmetic," does not mar our pleasure in the image. Or again (of snow):

*All that the king fisher or peacock owes
Of dyes that flame together and rejoice
In sunsets fallen are gathered in thy white.*

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'Tis true 'tis pretty. It comes gratefully to the lip. But the mind rejects it. Mr. Arthur Symons, in *Jezebel Mort* (Heinemann, 6s.), is—Mr. Arthur Symons. His style has not worn well. It dates. Its patchouli odour has staled. Mr. L. A. G. Strong (*Selected poems*, Hamish Hamilton, 6s.) writes with pith and point; he has a good sense of rustic character. He catches something of the tragic-comedy of life, though his poetic resources are not adequate to transmute it into the steady, tragic radiance of poetry. Mr. W. J. Turner made his name with luxuriant verses which, because their appeal was primarily to the senses, failed to satisfy the discerning. After *Miss America*, a vigorous *jeu d'esprit*, comes *Pursuit of Psyche* (Wishart, 3s. 6d.), a study in the philosophy of love. Its spells of frigid jargon and an occasional hornet-cloud of his stock adjectives are to be regretted; for the poem has a fine unity, and there are passages where chromatic imagery is thrown upon the paper with the spontaneity, the inspired recklessness, which marks the authentic poet from his fellows.

Some old-timers must be briefly mentioned. Mr. E. P. Barker has given us a cocktail Ovid, partly translated and most invitingly produced *Lover's Manual of Ovid*, (Blackwell). Mr. Maurice Baring has edited an excellent selection from his poems (*Selected poems*, Heinemann, 3s. 6d.). His well-known threnody on Aubrey Herbert seems to have lost, with its novelty, some of its power; but his *Diffugere Nives*, which I had not read for years, is still touched with dew. Mr. Armstrong's prevalent atmosphere (*Collected poems of Martin Armstrong*, Secker, 7s. 6d.) is that of a summer's afternoon, green, shadowy, and heavy with perfume. It cloys a little. He is, however, a charming writer, and in *The Buzzards* he broke through into the light and amplitude of major utterance. Mr. Binyon is chiefly known by his odic elegy, *For the fallen*. The collected edition of his poems (*Poems*, Macmillan, 2 vols., 21s.) reveals more fully than ever before the width of his interests and the depth of his understanding. His verse is steady, well muscled, dignified, yet capable of strong emotion. He is a poet whom one can return to again and again without exhausting his riches. Philip Henderson, who published some indifferent verses last year, has atoned with a buxom edition of John Skelton (Skelton, *Complete poems*, Dent, 10s. 6d.). It is furnished with notes and an introductory essay which illuminates whatever it touches; and it is produced with a sober charm.

*What could be dafter
Than Skelton's laughter?*

asked Robert Graves. But Skelton was not always daft: he could be serious too; his homespun doggerel has a way of flushing with a quaint, half-humorous tenderness that is most engaging. And it is worth remembering that Skelton perfected a curious, fluid rhythm of his own, susceptible of every subtlety of

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modulation, which remained unique until Robert Graves acquired the knack of it in his *Marmosite's miscellany*.

"The feather-pate of folly," A. E. Housman reminds us, "bears the falling sky," and certainly gold standards, budgets, and such dismal matters need not wreck our sanity while there are books like *101 Ballades* (Cobden-Sanderson, 7s. 6d.). Here are eighteen brilliant writers up with the lark—and such glorious larking! Mr. Belloc, Mr. Squire and Mr. Chesterton have never been in better form; and Mr. H. S. Mackintosh, a comparative new-comer, treads the light fantastic toe as confidently as the best of them. Mr. Squire's belated reveller, rich in his exuberant gravity; the thunderous drollery of Mr. Chesterton's *Ballade of first rain*; Mr. Mackintosh's *Mariage à la mode*, an incredible bit of tight-rope dancing—these are gems of purest play serene. With this delectable titbit of a book goes Mr. A. P. Herbert's *Book of ballads* (Benn, 12s. 6d.)—a barrel of honey-dew, sweetest in small doses. Mr. Campbell wears his cap-and-bells with a difference (*The Georgiad*, Boriswood, 5s.). He makes hay of the tribe of Georgians, and does it with a blend of anger and humour. He is at times very personal, but, as he himself complains, no one minds in the least. His own ferocity delights him, and we too are delighted; and every now and then his satire catches fire and crackles up in a blaze of lyric ardour. Mr. "Pinchbeck Lyre," Mr. Edgell Rickword, and Mr. Herbert Palmer are all satirists or parodists. "Pinchbeck Lyre" (commonly said to be Mr. Sassoon) has written the subleest and most toothsome parodies since Beerbohm (*Poems*, Duckworth, 3s. 6d.). His subject is Mr. Humbert Wolfe, and his parody is, as all parody should be, criticism. I cannot think that one poet has ever been so mercilessly exposed by another. If you are a Wolfe "fan," shun this book. Mr. Rickword (*Twittingpan*, Wishart, 2s. 6d.) is excellent; indeed, he has never written so well. His early poems were tame, tenebrous affairs, as insipid, to one reader at least, as Debussy and the French symbolists. But he has grown up. *Twittingpan* is wintry, caustic work, informed with the accents of a tonic disillusion. I notice that the poem *Strange party* (which appeared in an anthology in 1922) has been cobbled up; the line:

Wearied beneath the lute's light nonbalance

has become

Tired of the saxophone's pert nonbalance.

The change of musical instrument puts Mr. Rickword's poetic evolution in a nutshell. Mr. Herbert Palmer (*Cinder Thursday*, Benn, 3s. 6d.) inveighs against Mr. Eliot and the moderns in general. He is readable, but only at rare intervals

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do his whirling thrusts get home. *Unholy music*, by Lucy Watkin (Desmond Harmsworth, 1s.) is put forward as the work of a Soho charwoman. In her sincerity and absolute freshness of vision Miss Watkin (unless someone is playing Bacon to her Shakespeare) stands eminent among the moderns. A stanza from her affecting poem on vegetables clamours to be quoted :

*Once I can in London well Remember
The Stodgy Vegetables we used to buy if in June or November
Now the Potates are Excelent in taste quality and price
And the Peas Beans and Cabages are Green fresh and nice.*

Her contemptuous treatment of the proprieties of metre makes T. S. Eliot and his followers look timid.

There have been few anthologies of real vintage. The *Mercury book of verse* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) is an ordnance survey of some of the more cultivated territory of modern poetry. Many of the landmark names have a place. Mr. F. T. Wood has turned from Carey to Augustan poetry (*Augustan poetry*, by Frederick T. Wood, Macmillan, 7s. 6d.). The eighteenth century lacks the starry whirlpools of imagery which make the seventeenth so fascinating; but its frostier measures sometimes break into "wild civilities" of the most enchanting kind. Thus Joseph Warton, in a mannered poem, unexpectedly (and, one would swear, absentmindedly) drops such a gem as

The drooping daisies bathe in dulcet dew ;

and when John Hughes, whose one matchless lyric Mr. Wood unaccountably omits, sings—

*While the coy beauty speeds her flight
To distant groves from whence she came ;
So lightning vanishes from sight,
But leaves the forest in a flame,*

he is touched, if only for a moment, with a transfiguring spell of which he was perhaps only half aware. Mr. Wood has garnered well and wide, but not, I think, with the epicurean discrimination one could have wished for. Thus, in drawing from Matthew Green's *The Spleen*, he has let the one succulent patch in that poem escape him; he has used none of Earl Nugent's epigrams; and I miss Edward Littleton's whimsical poem *On a spider*. Mr. Abercrombie (*New English poems*, Gollancz, 6s.) takes a dignified but, surely, uncalled-for pleasure

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in his fold. His ewe-lambs, with few exceptions, bleat timidly and bleat alike. The book is redeemed, however, by several poems by Mr. Harold Monro, which are admirably marrowy. Mr. Thomas Moulton seems to take a pride in the inclusion, in his *Best poems of 1931* (Cape, 6s.), of Mr. Robert Nichols's poem on the *Nestor*. I can see no reason for pride. Indeed, if we except Mr. Squire's poem and, at most, one or two others, the whole book is a cemetery of stillbirths. Mr. Humbert Wolfe (*Signpost to poetry*, Cassell, 7s. 6d.), Mr. L. A. G. Strong (*Commonsense about poetry*, Gollancz, 2s. 6d.), and Mr. P. H. B. Lyon (*Discovery of poetry*, Arnold, 2s. 6d.) are all companionable guides. Mr. Strong is cool, matter-of-fact, sound. Mr. Lyon and Mr. Wolfe come to their task with real knowledge and agog with zeal. Mr. Wolfe's weakness is a fondness for metaphor which belongs rather to verse than prose. He darts across the empyrean of poetry like a comet, wagging his brilliant tail with excitement, but dazzling rather than enlightening the reader. Mr. John Masefield's little essay (*Poetry*, Heinemann, 3s. 6d.) is earnest and scholarly. Miss Rachel Annand Taylor writes admirably of Dunbar (*Dunbar*, Faber, 3s. 6d.). Dunbar, like Thomson, is praised more frequently than he is read. Miss Taylor's book, which is leagues removed from idolatry, should do something to make his work better known. And, to conclude, Mr. Richard Dark's *Shakespeare and that crush* (Blackwell, 4s. 6d.) should be read if only for its account of Wordsworth and Coleridge formulating their back-to-nature credo. It is waggish and irreverent, but it hits the nail on the head. Mr. Dark is never quite so skittish as the authors of *1066 and all that*, but in his milder way he makes diverting company.



SOME NOVELS OF 1931

By T. E. CALLANDER

THERE are too many of these damned novelists !

I say this deliberately, fully conscious of the rules of composition, the convention of an elegant opening paragraph, of the need for avoiding expletives in this periodical, and of all the other reasons why I should not begin my article thus. It is so true. That there are too many novelists is self-evident. That they are damned is equally plain. For, according to the schoolmen, a man is saved by faith or by works. It is not fashionable in letters to have any faith to-day. Intelligent scepticism (*What dare I think*) is the only passport to Parnassus. Wading through the year's harvest of novels, it is moderately certain that nobody this year

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will be saved by his published works. This is, our novelists have no faith, their works will not pass them through the Pearly Gate. *Ergo*, they are damned.

The discerning reader, who by long study, has made himself familiar with my subtle and allusive style, will gather that I have no high opinion of the novels of 1931. Why should I pretend that I have? We have in this journal no publishers' advertisements, and only three publishers have had the grace to send me review copies of the books that I notice here. I am thus free from any sense of favours received or to come, and can speak my mind. I am able at will to use the delicate rapier of my wit, or the bludgeon of my scorn. Hand me first the bludgeon.

Uncle Hugh, in the intervals of acting as fairy-godfather *cum* Santa Claus to the hungry sheep of the Book Society, has produced *Judith Paris*. This is very long, very detailed, very respectable, discreetly seasoned, and immensely dull. I for one was heartily tired of the Herries family and its scions long before I reached the end of *Rogue Herries*, and I shudder to hear that *Judith Paris* is not the end of this saga. Fortunately, one feels no compulsion to read what Mr. Walpole is at the moment gestating. Mr. Galsworthy, with that insight which has made him one of our leading novelists, has sensed that the world has lost some of its interest in the Forsyte gang. In *Maid in waiting*, they play only a kind of noises off-part. Anita Loos, in a ribald moment, once remarked that "you have to be Queen of England to wear a hat like that and get away with it." Something of the sort applies here. *Red Ike*—what a book! One can only say of it that it was an interesting example of what the present-day publicity expert can do. It was probably one of the worst novels that ever achieved the dignity of a cloth cover, and the one consolation that its appearance brought to me, who wasted an hour in attempting to read it, was that the *Evening standard* got caught for a respectable sum which it paid for the serial rights.

There have been any number of omnibus books, most of them having little or no justification. One is now prepared to accept the fact that it is possible, employing modern methods of book-production, to sell a volume containing 1,000 pages for 8s. 6d. Further proof is not needed, and the omnibus must look for something more than mere bulk and low price to justify its existence. One or two have succeeded. *The Fothergill omnibus*, for example, was an interesting experiment of which at least 80 per cent. came off. The *Collected ghost stories* of M. R. James was welcome. I feel tempted to digress here and talk about the tale of horror. It is strange that there are so few masters of this genre. When one counts them up, there are only half a dozen or so who can write a good ghost story: Le Fanu, Bierce, and one or two early novelists perhaps. W. W. Jacobs now and again. And M. R. James. He stands quite alone as the only consistently successful hair-raiser. It is the pretension of some publishers to issue volumes with childishly admonitory titles, such as *Not in bed, Keep the light on*,

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Strong nerves only and so on. Quite absurd. I maintain that only a mentally deficient reader could be stirred by these crude shockers. But there is something about James that is a little different. A devilish plausibility that leaves one with a sense of uneasiness and with nerves that quiver not altogether pleasantly. It would seem that James gets this effect by his economy of detail and his sparing use of the mechanism of horror. His description of that linen face, in *Oh, whistle, and I'll come to you*, exactly illustrates my meaning.

To return to our omnibuses. Dorothy Sayers has given us a second batch of *Great short stories of detection, mystery, and horror*. Not a very happy selection this time. Montagu Summers has compiled the *Supernatural omnibus*. I got a trifle tired of this, for Mr. Summers is altogether too earnest. I think he believes in fairies, and only Sir James Barrie is allowed to do that.

John Brophy has published two novels during the year—*Thunderclap* and *Flesh and blood*. The latter is a study of the mind of a murderer, with an excellent account of a murder trial. It is spoilt by an altogether weak ending, and by the fact that the murderer-hero is far too much the *preux chevalier* to arouse the sympathy of any ordinary clay-footed novel reader. *Thunder-clap* is a glorious, ribald, irreverent piece of fooling that makes me wish Mr. Brophy would not take himself quite so seriously as he does in *Flesh and blood*. He does the other thing better, and we have too few wits.

A Pig in a poke, by Rhys Davies, is a fine piece of work. It contains some of the best short stories that this writer has yet produced; one of them, "Revelation," the story of a man who had never seen his wife naked, being a masterpiece of psychological observation. "The Lily," in the same volume, is worthy of attention as a ruthless study of the revivalist fervour which flourishes in Wales. The whole collection reveals Davies as a writer of power who will do greater things than this. Incidentally, how these Welsh love one another!

Susan Ertz got a lot of publicity out of *Julian Probert*, a book which I thought would have been better had it been a little more credible. Julian Probert himself seemed to me to be a prig of the first water, or rather milk and water. I should have liked him better had the suspicions that he aroused by his venture into nudism with the fair Hildegard been less unfounded.

I approached *Hatter's castle*, the first novel of A. J. Cronin, with suspicion. I have that inverted snobbishness that detests being on the side of the big battalions, and I react unfavourably to any book that is heralded as the book of the week, month, year, or century. Most particularly do I react against the choice of the Book Society. In spite of this perversity, *Hatter's castle* conquered my prejudice. Messrs. Victor Gollancz tell me that they consider this the most significant novel that they have published this year, and I am inclined to agree with them. There is no doubt that Cronin has pulled off something really big. He makes one

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realize exactly why it is that theologians place pride at the head of the seven deadly sins, or the sin of James Brodie was nothing more than pride, an exaggerated development of what, in a lesser man, would be called self-respect. And yet the misery that was caused both to himself and to those around him by the pride of James Brodie was more than could have sprung from all the other deadly sins, even though they were combined with the more depressing of the seven virtues. Altogether *Hatter's castle* is a credit to Victor Gollancz and, as far as anything can be, a vindication of the existence of the Book Society.

Colette has not lived up to the promise that her earliest work held. *Claudine in Paris*, I think, is the best that has been offered of her novels this year. It has the same mixture of the naive and the naughty that made *Claudine at school* such a delicious piece of work. *Rene Neree* is not so good. The characterization of Rene is all that one expects of Colette, but the book lacks that air of crisp competence that stamps the Claudine series. *The Ripening corn* is certainly the most significant, though equally the slightest of the translations of Colette that Gollancz has published this year. It is amazing that a mere woman, even though that woman be Colette, should be able to get so completely into the skin of an adolescent boy as she has done in this book. It is worth reading *The Ripening corn* with the express purpose of comparing it with *Julian Probert*. Colette gives an infinitely better picture of the groping mind of her young hero than does Susan Ertz in her study of the insufferable Julian.

Two novels that have enjoyed something of a success this year have a strong flavour of Wells about them. Hargraves, in his *Imitation man*, is reminiscent simply because his theme is the sort of thing that Wells might have used in his earlier period. There the resemblance ends. The story of Charles Homunculus Chapman, who began his life on a manure heap and finished it on his nuptial bed, is a joyous piece of work. It is fantasy with that trace of reality which makes for satire, and yet it is difficult to say exactly what it is that Hargraves satirizes. Perhaps it is best simply to read the *Imitation man* just as a modern fairy-tale, and be thankful.

One does not feel quite so happy about *Life and Andrew Otway*, by Neil Bell. The author disarms criticism by acknowledging in a preface that his book resembles *Tono-Bungay*, and accounts for this by the fact that he read Wells's novel many years ago. He claims that the resemblances are only superficial, and refutes a possible charge of plagiarism with some warmth. Methinks the gentleman doth protest too much. If I had not read his preface, I should have been vaguely reminded of *Tono-Bungay*. Having had my attention called to the likeness, I was obsessed with it all the while I read *Life and Andrew Otway*. And, in the end, I decided that Mr. Bell, no doubt unconsciously, had been influenced by Wells to a point that makes it difficult to accept his novel as an original creation. It is a pity, and perhaps it does not matter a great deal. I think it was to Jurgen that the

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Sphinx remarked that there are only three stories in the world. The story in question, whether it be of Andrew Otway or of Ponderevo, is a good one, and will bear re-telling.



THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT COMPETITIONS

No. 2

(Set by F. Seymour Smith)

A. In the October 1931 number of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, Mr. F. M. Gardner facetiously suggested that library reports would be more interesting if they were written by the hero of NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH. A prize is offered for the best paragraphs from the fiftieth Annual Report of the Meantown Public Library under the headings STAFF, ISSUES, STOCK respectively, written in the style hinted at by Mr. Gardner. Entries should not exceed 350 words.

B. It is reported that a translation into Chinese of "Alice in Wonderland" has been banned by the Chinese Censor, on the grounds that the author's gift of speech to animals is calculated to lower the dignity of the human race. A prize is offered for the best report of an interview on the subject with the Rabbit, or the Hatter, or Alice, by our "Special Correspondent." Entries should not exceed one page of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT in length.

RULES

1. Entries, in an envelope marked COMPETITION, must reach the Hon. Editor not later than first post on Wednesday, 20th January.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym, but must also send their names and address. Entry is limited to members of the Library Association and its Sections.
3. The decision of the Hon. Editor is final, and no correspondence will be entertained.
4. One book prize will be awarded in each class every month. The winners will be asked to select their books from the National Book Council's Bibliography of 3s. 6d. Libraries.
5. The Hon. Editor reserves the right to withhold prizes if, in his opinion, entries do not reach a sufficiently high standard.
6. Any number of entries may be submitted, but no competitor will be awarded more than one prize in any one month.

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REPORT ON COMPETITION NO. 1

A. The entries for this section reveal a regrettable lack of respect, nay, even of charity, amongst Library Assistants. They also reveal, in many cases, a large ignorance of the nature of an epigram. For the guidance of competitors, I would remind them that a four-line verse in one of the metres of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, containing a crude insult in the last line, is not necessarily an epigram.

The prevailing theme was the recital of bawdy stories by delegates who should have been occupied with higher things. I was sorely tempted to disqualify all such entries on the ground that, although I went to Cheltenham with a broad and open mind, I came away with nothing more than one or two tales of Aberdonians and Jews. I found that such an ascetic course would leave me with very little to judge, and I relented. I was strengthened in my decision by the immense superiority of the coarser-minded entrants. Accordingly, with a certain trepidation as to the possible wrath to come, I award the prize in this section to the following impertinence:

CANARD REGARDING LIBRARIANS' INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS AT CONFERENCES FOR WHICH THE POET TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY. (Nor me.—HON. ED.)

*I'm told their scintillating discourse winds
Among such themes as please professional chaps:
Stock, issues, charging systems, and—perhaps—
Phallicdotes even broader than their minds.*

HOOPOOE.

B. Haddock v. Librarian of Burbleton was beyond the A.A.L. I received three entries for this section, and can only describe them as bad, worse, and worst. Rex sent the best of these three, but the result is not what I had hoped. W. A. H. Smith took the case altogether seriously, and his entry had none of plausible lunacy that is the keynote of *Misleading cases*. W. S. Haugh missed the point entirely. His entry starts with a statement that "the scene is laid in the International University at Croydon in the year A.D. 2500." This puts it out of the running, although he scored a point for the observation that "in the year 1950 Berwick Sayers was canonized, and Croydon took its rightful place as capital of the Universe." (Really though, this continual taking of pot shots at Croydon must stop. It isn't kind.) However, Mr. Haugh, in spite of one or two bright spots, loses because he has quite obviously never read *Misleading cases*. Accordingly, I award the prize to Rex for the entry printed below, not because he deserves it particularly, but *pour encourager les autres*.

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JUDGMENT GIVEN BY THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN THE CASE OF HADDOCK *v.* LIBRARIAN OF BURBLETON, ON THE QUESTION OF DEFACING PUBLIC PROPERTY BY OBLITERATING BETTING NEWS IN THE NEWSPAPERS DISPLAYED IN THE NEWSROOM OF THE BURBLETON FREE LIBRARY.

We, the representatives of the House of Lords, realize the great weight our decision will carry in this case, as it does in any "test" case. Our decision will affect not only the library system of Burbleton, but many other library systems in this country. The action itself is allowed by no clause of common law, nor is it allowed by the by-laws of Burbleton. It is a disgraceful procedure, and is most decidedly an offence against the Malicious Damages Act. Let there be no mistake about that. The Librarian, however, is responsible to his Library Committee for his actions, and this Committee in turn to the Corporation of Burbleton, the Library Authority. It is our duty therefore to dismiss the case. It seems that Mr. Albert Haddock should have approached the Corporation of Burbleton, and failing a satisfactory result, the plaintiff might adopt the method of "public enquiry." We feel that this case, although it is our duty to uphold (under these circumstances) what previous Courts have decided, should not have been brought to this assembly without being correctly handled.

REX.

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